

the tulips make me want to see

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the tulips make me want to see

by [sleepingnerd](#)

Summary

"And then he saw Potter curved over his place in a library table, tucking a single red tulip in the middle of his potions notebook. Severus stopped, eyes wide, looking as the other boy smiled a bit at his work and tried to leave.

"What." Severus said, grabbing his arm. "Are you doing."

Severus keeps getting flowers, and he doesn't know what to make of it.

Notes

This is the second fic for giucorreias' [Flufftober](#) . The prompt was flowers, and of course I had to go over the top and make a ridiculously long drabble. But, it was fun! The title comes from the poem "Tulips" by A. E. Stallings, which, although very nice, has little to do with the story.

The meaning of the flowers mentioned in the fic are:

Violet hyacinth - ask for forgiveness
Dwarf sunflower - admiration
Striped tulip - beautiful eyes
Almond blossoms - hope
Red tulip - declaration of love

It all started with a single hyacinth flower.

It was tucked into one of his potion notebooks, delicate violet petals resting under a few pages. Severus had gone off to find a few different books in the library and when he returned there it was, colorful and innocent. He stared at the flower for a few seconds, suspicious and not quite daring to touch it.

"Finite incantatem" he whispered, but nothing seemed to happen. Picking it with the hem of his robes, he examined the little flower, but it looked innocuous, no different from the little flowers that grew on some of the bushes near the lake.

Which, of course, didn't make any sense.

Severus wasn't the type to receive flowers, period. Most of Hogwarts either ignored or despised him, with the Marauders being particularly vocal on the latter. His house seemed to tolerate him, mostly because he was good with academics and it always paid to have someone to do your essays for you. He knew he wasn't exactly attractive, and he certainly wasn't charming. For someone to leave him a flower... Well, it could only be some sort of prank.

He eyed the little thing, not quite sure what to do with it. Severus knew he should just burn it, but he found that he strangely... didn't want to. Grumbling, he cast a quick stasis charm on the hyacinth and tucked it back into his notebook, deciding not think more of it for now.

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It didn't stop there.

Next there was a dwarf sunflower, left by his books when he went to the library. Then a striped tulip, on his usual desk at the next potions class. Then a few almond blossoms, tucked without his notice in his bag. All of them not charmed or poisoned, as he discovered in a later inspection. All of them delicate and colorful and for *him*.

With each flower Severus became more baffled. It clearly wasn't something meant to prank him, at least in the short term, and no one seemed to be treating him any different. No wayward glances, or anyone new speaking to him, nothing. The only thing that had changed lately was that the Marauders had stopped bothering him as much, but he guessed it had more to do with Sirius recently coming out as bisexual than the mysterious flowers.

By the sixth flower, Severus gave up. There was no lead, and he had no idea why someone was sending him flowers. His best bet was to wait for... something. If it was a reasonable explanation or the outcome of a really long, really senseless prank, he honestly didn't know.

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(He could never bring himself to throw them away, though.

Even as each time he picked a new flower his mind screamed that it wasn't for him, that it was just some sort of cruel joke, a tiny smile formed in his face, almost without his permission. He would softly touch the petals, quietly appreciating the color.

The stasis spell was out of his lips before he could even think about it.)

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Nice things didn't just *happen* to Severus, though, and that meant that, at some point, the odd,

hesitant happiness of receiving flowers had to be broken.

It happened like this: a couple of Slytherin students from his year had just finished giving him a beating, because he, the dirty half-blood, had dared to refuse to do their transfiguration homework. His body was sore and his mind, sour. It's was one of the rare moments he hated his house more than anything in the world.

And then he saw Potter curved over his place in a library table, tucking a single red tulip in the middle of his potions notebook. Severus stopped, eyes wide, looking as the other boy smiled a bit at his work and tried to leave.

"What." Severus said, grabbing his arm. "Are you doing."

He struggled to keep his voice flat, because he was just so, so angry. The disappointment settled deep and bitter in his chest, because of course it was just some sort of joke, a prank to see pathetic, unloved Severus fall in love with a secret admirer that leaves him *flowers*, of all things.

"Sev-Snape!" Potter exclaimed, tripping over his words. He seemed surprised, like he was not the one leaving flowers in other people's notebooks. "I was... I was just..." He paused, blushing. "I don't really know how to answer this." The boy finally admitted, looking down at Severus' hand, which was still holding his arm. Severus let it go like it was burning.

"So you were the one leaving the flowers" He said, voice accusing. "Are you satisfied, Potter? Could complete whatever joke you had in mind?" He sneered, hiding his hurt behind anger. He couldn't let the other boy know how hurt he was that none of it was real.

"No!" he exclaimed. "I mean, yes, I was the one leaving the flowers. But it wasn't a joke" Potter protested, sounding offended.

"Well, what was it, then?" Severus asked, looking at him suspiciously. He couldn't think of any other reason for *Potter*, of all people, to leave him flowers.

"That is a bit harder to explain." He said, running his hand through his already wild hair. He almost looked like he didn't want to answer, but one look at Severus and he sighed, defeated. "When Sirius came out it made me... question some things. Being attracted to girls always seemed like a given, you know? Part of the package of being a guy. So when there was a nice enough girl, Lily, well... I thought that must be what all the boys were talking about, in that liking girls thing." Potter sighed, frustrated. "And then Sirius came out, and I realized, really, truly realized, that girls weren't the only option. And, well. It put my fixation on you on whole new light. I... didn't know how to say it, though. So, you know. I always liked the language of flowers, and it seemed like a good idea at the time." He took the flower he had put in his book and offered it to Severus, smile self-deprecating and just a bit hopeful.

Severus stared at him, confused. None of what Potter was saying made any sense: how could *he* like *him*? But, at the same time, he could remember all the times he caught Potter looking at him, and how the Marauders hadn't pranked him in months, not even a single mean word. It all came together to form a picture that he couldn't quite comprehend, not just yet.

"It's, uhm, it's alright if you don't return my feelings." The boy said nervously when Severus stayed silent, fidgeting with the leaves in the stem of the tulip. "And once again I'm sorry for everything I've done before. It was never right of me to do that, even if now I can see the reason behind it." He grimaced at the memory, and Severus was surprised to find his voice sounded truthful.

“You never said sorry before.” Severus muttered, still a bit too stunned, and took the flower. It was a deep red, more subtle and darker than the gryffindor one.

“Oh, it was the first flower I gave you.” Potter answered, surprised. “Hyacinth. It means an ask for forgiveness.” He laughed a bit. “I guess the whole message thing didn't work as clearly as I wanted it to.”

Severus ran his fingers over the petal, thoughtful. His feelings for Potter felt tangled, the frustration mixed with denied attraction and anger into a chaotic, messy whole. He didn't understand it, not yet, but maybe that didn't matter so much right now.

“And what does this one mean?” He asked, meeting Potter's brown eyes. There was a touch of defiance in his tone, and he felt strangely vulnerable, even though Potter was the one pouring his heart out.

“It means... It means a declaration of love.” Potter answered, the words soft. There was a sureness in his voice, in his timid smile, and with a start Severus realized that this was no joke: James Potter, his biggest enemy ever since he set foot in Hogwarts, was in love with him.

The idea seemed ridiculous, unreal. He should be laughing, he should be demanding that Potter stopped this joke. And yet... and yet he wanted it to be true.

“I'm in love with you, Severus Snape, and I have no idea of how or when or why but,” He shrugged, smiling. “It's true.”

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(Severus had to kiss him after that, of course. Just to wipe that charming smile off his face. James smelled of flowers and a whole lot of trouble, but Severus found he didn't mind it, much, as long as he kept getting flowers).

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